THE METHODS OF MORIS KLAW

By SAX ROHMER,
Author of "THE YELLOW CLAW," ETC.

The Mysteries of the Greek Room

(Copyright, 1915.)

When did Moris Klaw first appear in London?

It is a question which I am asked sometimes and to which I reply: To the best of my knowledge, shortly before the commencement of strange happenings at the Menzies Museum.

My friendship with Martin Coram led to my first meeting with Moris Klaw—a meeting which now has induced me to become his biographer, inadequate though my information unfortunately remains.

It was some three months after the appointment of Coram to the curatorship of the Menzies Museum that the first of a series of singular occurrences took place there.

It befell one night in August, and the matter was brought to my ears by Coram himself on the following morning.

I had, in fact, just taken my seat at the breakfast table when he walked in unexpectedly and sank into an arm-chair.

"There's trouble at the museum!" he said abruptly. "I want you to run around."

"Something gone?" I asked.

"No; worse!" was his reply.

"What do you mean, Coram?"

He threw the cigarette, untasted, into the hearth.

"You know Conway?" he said. "Conway, the night attendant. Well—he's dead!"

"Do you mean that he died in the night?" I inquired.

"Yes. Done for, poor devil! He's had his neck broken!"

I waited for no further explanations, but hastily dressing, accompanied Coram to the museum.

The room described in the catalogue as the "Greek Room" proved to be the scene of the tragedy.

This is one of the two overlooking the square, and contains some of the finest items of the collection.

The museum is not open to the public until ten o'clock, and I found, upon arriving there, that the only occupants of the Greek room were the custodian on duty, two constables, a plain-clothes officer, and an inspector—that is, if I except the body of poor Conway.

He had not been touched, but lay as he was found by Beale, the custodian who took charge of the upper rooms during the day. It was patent that he was beyond medical aid.

In fact, the position of his body was so extraordinary as almost to defy description. His head, turned partially to one side, was doubled underneath his breast in a most dreadful manner, indisputably pointing to a broken neck, and his custodian's cap lay some distance away, under a table supporting a heavy case of vases.

So much was revealed at a glance, and I turned blankly to Coram.

"What do you make of it?" he said.

I shook my head in silence. I scarcely could grasp the reality of the thing; indeed, I was still staring at the huddled figure when the doctor arrived.

At his request we laid the dead man flat upon the floor, to facilitate an examination; and we then saw that he was greatly cut and bruised about the head and face, and that his features were distorted in a most extraordinary manner, almost as though he had been suffocated.

The doctor did not fail to notice this expression.

"Excuse me, sir," said the inspector, "but there certainly was something going on here. Have you seen the glass case in the next room?"

"Glass case?" muttered Coram, running his hand distractedly through his thick black hair. "No; what of a glass case?"

"In here, sir," explained the inspector, leading the way into the adjoining apartment.

At his words we all followed, and found that he referred to the glass front of a wall case containing statuettes and images of Egyptian deities. The center pane of this was smashed into fragments, the broken glass strewing the floor and the shelves inside the case.

"That looks like a struggle, sir, doesn't it?" said the inspector.

"Heaven help us! What does it mean?" groaned poor Coram.

"That we must try and find out," replied the inspector. "Meanwhile here are his keys. They lay on the floor in a corner of the Greek room."

Coram took them, mechanically.

"Beale," he said to the custodian, "see if any of the cases are unlocked."

The man proceeded to go around the rooms. He had proceeded no further than the Greek room when he made a discovery.

"Here's the top of this unfastened, sir!" he cried.

We hurriedly joined him, to find that he stood before a marble pedestal surmounted by a thick glass case containing what Coram had frequently assured me was the gem of the collection—the Athenean harp.

It was alleged to be of very ancient Greek workmanship, and was constructed of fine gold, inlaid with jewels.

"I thought so!" said the plain-clothes man. "A clever museum thief!"

Coram sighed wearily. "My good fellow," he replied, "can you explain by any earthly hypothesis how a man could get into these apartments and leave them again during the night?"

"Regarding that, sir," remarked the detective, "there are a few questions I should like to ask you. In the first place, at what time does the museum close?"

"At six o'clock in the summer."

"What do you do when the last visitor has gone?"

"Having looked the outside door, Beale, here, thoroughly examines every room to make certain that no one remains concealed. He next locks the communicating doors and comes down into the hall. It is then his custom to hand me the keys."

"I gave them into poor Conway's keeping last evening when he came on at half past six, and every hour thereafter it was his duty to go through the museum, relocking all the doors behind him."

"I understand that there is a tell-tale watch in each room?"

"Yes. That in the Greek room registers 4 a. m., so that it was about then that he met his death. He had evidently opened the door communicating with the next room—that containing the broken glass case; but he did not touch the detector, and the door was found open this morning."

"Some one must have lain concealed there and sprung upon him as he entered."

"Impossible! There is no other means of entrance or exit. The three windows are iron-barred and they have not been tampered with. Moreover, the watch shows that he was there at three o'clock, and nothing larger than a mouse could find shelter in the place."

"Then the murderer followed him into the Greek room."

"Might I venture to point out that, had he done so, he would have been there this morning when Beale arrived? The door of the Greek room was locked, and the keys were found inside upon the floor!"

"The thief might have had a duplicate set."

"Quite impossible. But, granting the impossible, how did he get in, since the hall door was bolted and barred?"

"We must assume that he succeeded in concealing himself before the museum was closed."

"The assumption is not permissible, in view of the fact that Beale and I both examined the rooms last night prior to handing the keys to Conway. However, again granting the impossible, how did he get out?"

The Scotland Yard man removed his cap and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. "I must say, sir, it is a very strange thing," he said. "But how about the iron door here?"

"It leads to my own apartments. I alone hold a key. It is locked," said Coram, and proved his point.

A brief examination served to show that exit from any of the barred windows was impossible.

"Well, sir," said the detective, "if the man had keys he could have come down into the hall and the lower room."

"Step down and look," was Coram's invitation.

The windows of the room on the ground floor were also heavily protected, and it was easy to see that none of them had been opened.

"Upon my word," exclaimed the inspector. "It's uncanny! He couldn't have gone out by the hall door, because you say it was bolted and barred on the inside."

"It was," replied Coram.

"One moment, sir," interrupted the plain-clothes man. "If that was so, how did you get in this morning?"

"It was Beale's custom," said Coram, "to come around by the private entrance to my apartments. We then entered the museum together by the iron door in the Greek room, and relieved Conway of the keys. There are several little matters to be attended to in the morning before admitting the public, and the other door is never unlocked before 10 o'clock."

"Did you lock the door when you came through this morning?"

"Immediately on finding poor Conway."

"Could any one have come through this door in the night, provided he had a duplicate key?"

"No. There is a bolt on the private side."

"And you were in your rooms all last night?"

"From 12 o'clock, yes."

The police looked at one another silently; then the inspector gave an embarrassed laugh.

"Frankly, sir," he said, "I'm completely puzzled!"

We passed upstairs again. They were about to depart when there came a knocking upon the iron door.

"It is Hilda," said Coram, slipping the key in the lock—"my daughter," he added, turning to the detective.

The heavy door swinging open, there entered Hilda Coram, a slim, classical figure, with the regular features of her father and the pale-gold hair of her dead mother.

She looked ill, and stared about her apprehensively.

"Good morning, Mr. Searles," she greeted me. "Is it not dreadful about poor Conway?"

Then she glanced at Coram. I saw that she held a card in her hand.

"Father, there is such a singular old man asking to see you."

She handed the card to Coram, who in turn passed it to me. It was that of Douglas Glade of the Daily Cable, and had written upon it in Glade's hand, the words:

"To introduce Mr. Moris Klaw."

"I suppose it is all right if Mr. Glade vouches for him," said Coram. "Ask Mr. Klaw to come through, Hilda."

Shortly afterward there entered a strange figure.

It was that of a tall man, who stooped so that his apparent height was diminished, a very old man, who carried his many years lightly, or a younger man prematurely aged. None could say which.

His skin had the hue of dirty vellum, and his hair, his shaggy brows, his scanty beard were so toneless as to defy classification in terms of color. He wore an archaic brown derby, smart, gold rimmed pince-nez, and a black silk muffler.

A long, caped, black cloak completely enveloped the stooping figure, and from beneath its mud-spattered edge peeped long-toed Continental boots.

He removed his hat.

"Good morning, Mr. Coram," he said. His voice reminded me of the distant rumbling of empty casks; his accent was wholly indescribable.

"Good morning" (to the detective), "Mr. Grimsby. Good morning, Mr. Searles. Your friend, Mr. Glade, tells me I shall find you here. Good morning, inspector. To Miss Coram I already have said good morning."

From the lining of the flat-topped hat he took out one of those small, cylindrical scent sprays and played its contents upon his high, bald brow. An odor of verbena filled the air.

He replaced the spray in the hat, the hat upon his scantily thatched crown.

"There is here a smell of dead men!" he explained.

I turned aside to hide my smile, so grotesque was my first impression of the amazing individual known as Moris Klaw.

"Mr. Coram," he continued, "I am an old fool who sometimes has wise dreams. Crime has been the hobby of a busy life. Have I your permit to see if I can help?"

All of us, the police included, were strangely impressed now.

"Certainly," said Coram. "Will you step this way?"

Moris Klaw bent over the dead man.

"You have moved him!" he said sharply.

It was explained that this had been for the purpose of a medical examination.

He nodded absently. With the aid of a large magnifying glass he was scrutinizing poor Conway. He examined his hair, his eyes, his hands, his finger nails. He rubbed long, flexible fingers upon the floor beside the body—and sniffed at the dust!

"Some one so kindly will tell me all about it," he said, turning out the dead man's pockets.

Coram briefly recounted much of the foregoing, and replied to the oddly chosen questions which from time to time Moris Klaw put to him. Throughout the dialogue the singular old man conducted a detailed search of every square inch, I think, of the Greek room.

Before the case containing the harp he stood peering.

"It is here that the trouble centers," he muttered. "What do I know of such a Grecian instrument? Let me think."

He glanced toward my friend.

"Thoughts are things, Mr. Coram. If I might spend a night here—upon the very spot of floor where the poor Conway fell—I could from the atmosphere recover a picture of the thing in his mind"—indicating Conway—"at the last!"

The words and the manner of their delivery thrilled us all.

"What is it," continued the weird old man, "but the odic force, the ether—say it how you please—which carries the wireless message—the lightning? It is a huge, subtle, sensitive plate. Inspiration, what you call bad luck and good luck—all are but reflections from it. The supreme thought preceding death is imprinted on the surrounding atmosphere like a photograph. I have trained this"—he tapped his brow—"to reproduce those photographs! May I sleep here tonight, Mr. Coram?"

Somewhere beneath the ramshackle exterior we had caught a glimpse of a man of power.

"I should be most glad of your assistance," answered my friend.

"No police must be here tonight," rumbled Moris Klaw. "No heavy-footed constables filling the room with thought of large cooks and small ales must fog my negatives!"

"Can that be arranged?" asked Coram of the inspector.

"The men on duty can remain in the hall, if you wish it, sir."

"Good!" rumbled Moris Klaw.

He moistened his brow with verbena, bowed uncouthly and shuffled from the Greek room.

* * * * * * *

Moris Klaw reappeared in the evening accompanied by a strikingly beautiful brunette.

The change of face upon the part of Mr. Grimsby of Scotland Yard was singular.

"My daughter, Isis," explained Moris Klaw. "She assists to develop my negatives."

Grimsby became all attention.

Leaving two men on duty in the hall, Moris Klaw, his daughter, Grimsby, Coram, and I went up to the Greek room. Its darkness was relieved by a single lamp.

"I've had the stones in the Athenean harp examined by a lapidary," said Coram. "It occurred to me that they might have been removed and paste substituted. It was not so, however."

"No," rumbled Klaw. "I thought of that, too. No visitors have been admitted here during the day?"

"The Greek room has been closed."

"It is well, Mr. Coram. Let no one disturb me until my daughter comes in the morning.

Isis Klaw placed a red silk cushion upon the spot where the dead man had lain.

"Some pillows and a blanket, Mr. Klaw?" suggested the suddenly attentive Grimsby.

"I thank you, no," was the reply. "They would be saturated with alien impressions. My cushion it is odically sterilized! The 'etheric storm' created by Conway's last mental emotion reaches my brain unpolluted. Good night, gentlemen! Good night, Isis!"

We withdrew, leaving Moris Klaw to his ghostly vigil.

Leaving the men on duty in the hall, Coram and I shortly afterward also quitted the museum by the main entrance, in order to avoid disturbing Moris Klaw by using the curator's private door.

To my friend's study Hilda Coram brought us coffee. She was unnaturally pale, and her eyes were feverishly bright. I concluded that the tragedy was responsible, and made a remark to that effect.

"Perhaps, to an extent," said Coram; "but she is studying music, and I fear overworking in order to pass a stiff exam."

Coram and I surveyed the Greek room problem from every conceivable standpoint; but were unable to surmise how the thief had entered, how left, and why he had fled without his booty.

"I don't mind confessing," said Coram, "that I am very ill at ease. We haven't the remotest idea how the murderer got into the Greek room nor how he got out again. Bolts and bars, it is evident, do not prevail against him, so that we may expect a repetition of the dreadful business at any time."

"What precautions do you propose to take?"

"Well, there will be a couple of police on duty in the museum for the next week or so, but after that we shall have to rely upon a night watchman. The funds only allow of the appointment of four attendants—three for day and one for night duty."

"Do you think you'll find any difficulty in getting a man?"

"No," replied Coram. "I know of a steady man who will come as soon as we are ready for him."

I slept but little that night, and was early afoot and around to the museum. Isis Klaw was there before me, carrying the red cushion, and her father was deep in conversation with Coram.

Detective-Inspector Grimsby approached me.

"I see you're looking at the cushion, sir," he said smilingly. "But it's not a 'plant.' He's not an up-to-date cracksman. Nothing's missing."

"You need not assure me of that," I replied. "I do not doubt Mr. Klaw's honesty of purpose."

"Wait till you hear his mad theory, though," he said, with a glance aside at the girl.

"Mr. Coram," Moris Klaw was saying in his odd, rumbling tones, "my psychic photograph is of a woman—a woman dressed all in white."

Grimsby coughed—then flushed as he caught the eye of Isis.

"Poor Conway's mind," continued Klaw, "is filled with such a picture when he breathes his last—great wonder he has for the white woman and great fear for the Athenean harp, which she carries!"

"Which she carried?" cried Coram.

"Some woman took the harp from its case a few minutes before Conway died," affirmed Moris Klaw. "I have much research to make now, and with aid from Isis shall develop my negative."

"Yesterday I learned from the constable who was on night duty at the corner of the square that a heavy van went driving round at four o'clock. It was shortly after four o'clock that the tragedy occurred. The driver was unaware that there was no way out, you understand? Is it important? I cannot say. It often is such points that matter.

"We must, however, waste no time. Until you hear from me again you will lay dry plaster of paris all around the stand of the Athenean harp each night. Good morning, gentlemen!"

His arm linked in his daughter's, he left the museum.

For some weeks after this mysterious affair all went well at the Menzies Museum. The new night watchman, a big Scot, by name John Macalister, seemed to have fallen thoroughly into his duties, and everything was proceeding smoothly.

Poor Macalister! His bulk did not save him from a dreadful fate. He was found one fine morning lying flat on his back in the Greek room—dead.

As in the case of Conway, the place showed unmistakable signs of a furious struggle.

The attendant's chair had been dashed upon the floor with such violence as to break three of the legs; a bust of Pallas that had occupied a corner position upon a marble pedestal was found to be hurled down. The top of the case which usually contained the Athenean harp had been unlocked, and the priceless antique lay close by upon the floor.

The door of the Greek room was locked upon the inside, and the keys were found on the floor. From the detector-watches in the other rooms it was evident that his death must have taken place about three o'clock.

Nothing was missing, and the jewels in the harp had not been tampered with.

But, most amazing circumstance of all, imprinted upon the dry plaster of paris which, in accordance with the instructions of the mysteriously absent Moris Klaw, had nightly been placed around the case containing the harp, were the marks of little bare feet!

A message sent through the willing agency of Inspector Grimsby to the Wapping abode of the old curio dealer resulted in the discovery that Moris Klaw was abroad. His daughter, however, reported having received a letter from her father which contained the words:

"Let Mr. Coram keep the key of the case containing the Athenean harp under his pillow at night."

"What does she mean?" asked Coram. "That I am to detach that particular key from the bunch or place them all beneath my pillow?"

Grimsby shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm simply telling you what she told me, sir."

"I should suspect the man to be an impostor," said Coram, "if it were not for the extraordinary confirmation of his theory furnished by the footprints. They certainly looked like those of a woman."

Remembering how Moris Klaw had acted, I sought out the constable who had been on duty at the corner of South Grafton Square on the night of the second tragedy. From him I elicited a fact which, though insignificant in itself, was, when associated with another circumstance, certainly singular.

A traction engine, drawing two heavy wagons, had been driven round the square at 3 a. m., the driver thinking that he could get out on the other side.

That was practically all I learned from the constable, but it served to set me thinking. Was it merely a coincidence that, at almost the exact hour of the previous tragedy, a heavy pantechnicon had passed the museum?

"It's not once in six months," the man assured me, "that any vehicle but a tradesman's cart goes round the square. You see, it doesn't lead anywhere, but this chap, he was rattling by before I could stop him; and, though I shouted, he couldn't hear me, the engine was making such noise. So I just let him drive round and find out for himself."

* * * * * * * *

I now come to the event which concluded this extraordinary case; and that it may be clearly understood I must explain the positions which we took up during the nights of the following week, for Coram had asked me to take a night watch with himself, Grimsby, and Beale in the museum.

Beale, the custodian, remained in the hall and lower room—it was catalogued as the Bronze room. Coram patrolled the room at the top of the stairs, Grimsby the next, or Greek room, and I the Egyptian room.

None of the doors was locked, and Grimsby, by his own special request, held the keys of the cases in the Greek room.

We commenced our vigil on Saturday, and I for one found it a lugubrious business. One electric lamp was usually left burning in each apartment throughout the night, and I sat as near to that in the Egyptian room as possible and endeavored to distract my thoughts with a bundle of papers with which I had provided myself.

In the next room I could hear Grimsby walking about incessantly, and, at regular intervals, the scratching of a match as he lighted a cigar. He was an inveterate cheroot smoker.

Our first night's watching was prolific of no result, and the five that followed were equally monotonous.

Upon Grimsby's suggestion we observed great secrecy in the matter of these dispositions. Even Coram's small household was kept in ignorance of this midnight watching.

Grimsby, following out some theory of his own, now determined to dispense altogether with light in the Greek room. Friday was intensely hot, and occasional fitful breezes brought with them banks of black thunder-clouds, which, however, did not break, and up to the time that we assumed our posts at the museum no rain had fallen.

At about twelve o'clock I looked out into South Grafton Square and saw that the sky was entirely obscured by a heavy mass of inky clouds ominous of a gathering storm.

Returning to my chair beneath the electric lamp, I took up a work of Mark Twain's which I had brought as a likely antidote to melancholy or nervousness. As I commenced to read, for the twentieth time, the "Jumping Frog," I heard the scratch of Grimsby's match in the next room, and knew that he had lighted his fifth cigar.

It must have been about one o'clock when the rain came. I heard the big drops on the glass roof, followed by the steady pouring of the deluge.

For perhaps five minutes it rained steadily, and then ceased as abruptly as it had begun. Above the noise of the water rushing down the metal gutters I distinctly detected the sound of Grimsby striking another match.

Then, with a mighty crash, came the thunder.

Directly above the museum it seemed as though the very heavens had burst, and the glass roof rattled as if a shower of stones had fallen, the thunderous report echoing and reverberating hollowly through the building.

As the lightning flashed with dazzling brilliance, I started from my chair and stood, breathless, with every sense on the alert, for, strangely intermingling with the patter of the rain that now commenced to fall again, came a low wailing, like nothing so much as the voice of a patient succumbing to an anesthetic.

There was something indefinably sweet, but indescribably weird in the low and mysterious music.

Not knowing whence it proceeded, I stood undetermined what to do; but just as the thunder boomed again I heard a wild cry—undoubtedly proceeding from the Greek room. Springing to the door, I threw it open.

All was in darkness, but as I entered a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the place.

I saw a sight which I can never forget. Grimsby lay flat upon the floor by the further door.

But, dreadful as that spectacle was, it scarcely engaged my attention; nor did I waste a second glance upon the Athenean harp, which lay close beside its empty case.

For the figure of a woman, draped in filmsy white, was passing across the Greek room.

Grim fear took me by the throat—since I could not doubt that what I saw was a supernatural manifestation. Darkness followed. I heard a loud, wailing cry and a sound as of a fall.

Then Coram came running through the Greek room.

Trembling violently, I joined him, and together we stood looking down at Grimsby.

"Good God," whispered Coram, "this is awful! It cannot be the work of mortal hands! Poor Grimsby is dead!"

"Did you—see—the woman?" I muttered. I will confess it; my courage had completely deserted me.

He shook his head, but, as Beale came running to join us, glanced fearfully into the shadows of the Greek room.

The storm seemed to have passed, and as we three frightened men stood around Grimsby's recumbent body we could almost hear the beating of each other's hearts.

Suddenly, giving a great start, Coram clutched my arm. "Listen!" he said. "What's that?"

I held my breath and listened. "It's the thunder in the distance," said Beale.

"You are wrong," I answered. "It is some one knocking at the hall entrance! There goes the bell, now!"

Coram gave a sigh of relief.

"Heavens!" he said. "I've no nerves left! Come on and see who it is."

The three of us, keeping very close together, passed quickly through the Greek room and down into the hall. As the ringing continued, Coram unbolted the door, and there, on the steps, stood Moris Klaw!

Some vague idea of his mission flashed through my mind.

"You are too late!" I cried. "Grimsby has gone!"

I saw a look of something like anger pass over his large, pale features, and then he had darted past us and vanished up the stairs.

Having rebolted the door, we rejoined Moris Klaw in the Greek room. He was kneeling beside Grimsby in the dim light, and Grimsby, his face ghastly pale, was sitting up and drinking from a flask.

"I am in time," said Moris Klaw. "He has only fainted!"

"It was the ghost!" whispered the man from Scotland Yard. "My God! I'm prepared for anything human—but when the lightning came and I saw that white thing—playing the harp——"

Coram turned aside and was about to pick up the harp which lay upon the floor near, when——

"Ah!" cried Moris Klaw. "Do not touch it! It is death!"

Coram started back as though he had been stung, as Grimsby very unsteadily got upon his feet.

"Turn up lights," directed Moris Klaw, "and I will show you!"

The curator went out to the switchboard and the Greek room became brightly illuminated. The ramshackle figure of Moris Klaw seemed to be invested with a triumphant majesty. Behind the pebbles his eyes gleamed.

"Observe," he said. "I raise the harp from the floor." He did so. "And I live. For why? Because I do not take hold upon it in a natural manner—by the top; I take it by the side! Conway and Macalister took hold upon it at the top; and where are they? Conway and Macalister?"

"Mr. Klaw," said Coram, "I cannot doubt that this black business is all clear to your very unusual intelligence, but to me it is a profound mystery. I have, myself, in the past, taken up the harp in the way you describe as fatal, and without injury——"

"But not immediately after it had been played upon," interrupted Moris Klaw.

"Played upon? I have never attempted to play upon it!"

"Even had you done so you might yet have escaped, provided you set it down before touching the top part. Note, please!"

He ran his long white fingers over the golden strings. Instantly there stole upon my ears that weird, wailing music which had heralded the strange happenings of the night.

"And now," continued our mentor, "while I, who am cunning, hold it where the ladies' gold feet join, observe the top—where the hand would ordinarily rest in holding it."

We gathered around him.

"A needle point," he rumbled impressively, "protruding. The player touches it not. But who takes it from the hand of the player, dies! By placing the harp again upon its base the point again retires.

"Shall I say what is upon that point to drive a man mad like a dog with rabies; to stay potent for generations? I cannot. It is a secret buried with the ugly body of Caesar Borgia."

"Caesar Borgia!" we cried in chorus.

"Ah!" rumbled Moris Klaw, "your Athenean harp was indeed made by Paduano Zelloni, the Florentine. It is a clever forge! I have been in Rome until yesterday. You are surprised? I am sorry, for the poor Macalister died.

"Having perfected, with the aid of Isis, my mind photograph of the lady who plays the harp, I go to Rome to perfect the story of the harp. For why? At my house I have records, but incomplete, useless. In Rome I have a friend, of so old a family, and one so wicked, I shall not name it.

"He has recourse to the great Vatican library—to the annals of his race. There he finds me an account of such a harp. In those priceless parchments it is called 'a Greek lyre of gold.' It is described. I am convinced. I am sure!

"Once the beautiful Lucrezia Borgia play upon this harp. To one who is distasteful to her she says: 'Replace for me my harp.' He does so. He is a dead man. God, what cleverness!

"Where has it lain for generations before your Sir Menzies find it? No man knows. But it has still its virtues. How did the poor Menzies die? Threw himself from his room window I recently learn. This harp certainly was in his room. Conway, after dashing mad about the place, springs head downward from the attendant's chair. Macalister dies in exhaustion and convulsions!"

A silence, when:

"What caused the harp to play?" asked Coram.

Moris Klaw looked hard at him. Then a thrill of new horror ran through my veins. A low moan came from somewhere hard by.

Coram turned in a flash.

"Why, my private door is open!" he whispered.

"Where do you keep your private keys?" rumbled Klaw.

"In my study." Coram was staring at the open door, but seemed afraid to approach it. "We have been using the attendant's keys at night. My own are on my study mantelpiece now."

"I think not," continued the thick voice. "Your daughter has them."

"My daughter!" cried Coram, and sprang to the open door. "Heavens!" Hilda! Hilda!"

"She is somnambulistic," whispered Moris Klaw in my ear. "When certain unusual sounds, such as heavy vehicles at night, reach her in her sleep (ah, how little we know of the phenomena of sleep!) she arises, and, in common with many sleepwalkers, always acts the same. Something, in the case of Miss Hilda, attracts her to the golden harp——"

"She is studying music."

"She must rest from it. Her brain is overwrought. She unlocks the case and strikes the cords of the harp, relocking the door, replacing the keys—I before have known such cases—then retires as she came. Who takes the harp from her hands, or raises it, if she has laid it down upon its side, dies!

"These dead attendants were brave fellows, both. For, hearing the music, they came running, saw how the matter was, and did not awaken the sleeping player. Conway was poisoned as he returned the harp to its case; Macalister, as he took it up from where it lay.

"Something tonight awoke her ere she could relock the door. The fright of so awaking made her to swoon."

Coram's kindly voice, and the sound of a girl sobbing affrightedly reached us.

"It was my yell of fear, Mr. Klaw," said Grimsby shamefacedly. "She looked like a ghost!"

"I understand," rumbled Moris Klaw soothingly. "As I see her in my sleep she is very awesome! I will show you the picture Isis has made from my etheric photograph. I saw it, finished, earlier tonight. It confirmed me that the Miss Hilda with the harp in her hand was poor Conway's last thought in life."

"Mr. Klaw," said Grimsby earnestly, "you are a very remarkable man!"

"Yes?" he rumbled, and gingerly placed in its case the "Greek lyre of gold" which Paduano Zelloni had wrought for Caesar Borgia.

From the brown hat he took out his scent spray, and squirted verbena upon his heated forehead.

"That harp," he explained. "It smell of dead men!"

I saw a sight which I can never forget.